DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 697 FL 018 041

AUTHOR Ballinger, Robert L.; Ballinger, Virginia S.
TITLE Video: The Foreign Language Textbook of the Future.
PUB DATE 16 Apr 89
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (21st, Nashville, TN, April 13-15, 1989).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Audiovisual Aids; *Curriculum Enrichment; Educational Objectives; Instructional Materials; Learning Activities; Media Adaptation; Secondary Education; *Second Language Instruction; Teaching Methods; *Videotape Recordings; Visual Learning
IDENTIFIERS *Empowerment

ABSTRACT

The role of video as a foreign language textbook of the future is discussed. The flexibility of the video format accommodates a wide variety of learning style characteristics. It is maintained that the ideal textbook: (1) empowers the teacher by matching the teacher's objectives, by being under the teacher's control, by condensing time, by breaking through the limitations of the classroom, and by freezing the linguistic event under study); and (2) enhances the learnability of the lesson by stimulating the visual sense, by linking auditory information to visual images, by allowing students to respond to the material, and by letting students review the material at their own pace). Video is a technology that takes into account the individual differences of foreign language learners by attending to their visual and auditory perceptual strengths. Video also allows foreign language teachers to manipulate learning situations in the target language and setting because they can preview the event and prepare learning activities ahead of time. (DJD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED308697

Video: the Foreign Language Textbook of the Future

presented at the
Central States Conference
on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
April 16, 1989

Robert L. Ballinger
Worthington (OH) City Schools

Virginia S. Ballinger
Upper Arlington (OH) City Schools

FL018041

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ballinger, R.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"Video: the Foreign Language Textbook of the Future"

Imagine taking your French II class to Nice for a week. Of course, you visit the beaches where your students tan themselves on smooth pebbles, not white powdery sand. As you walk through the narrow streets of the old neighborhood, you point out the unique architecture of this sun-drenched town along *la Côte d'Azure*. You stop at one of many artists' studios and are delighted when the artist himself takes the time to discuss his work with your students.

Later, that evening, as your group strolls beside the sparkling fountains in the *Espace Masséna*, you see a large tent where Nice is hosting an international folkdancing festival. Struck by an inspiration, you wander backstage looking for someone who would be willing to spend some time with your students. You are ecstatic when a couple of dancers from Nice offer to explain to your students the regional costumes they are wearing.

The next day, a friend of yours, Mme Delvallet, invites all of you to her spacious apartment for dinner. Before the meal, she prepares and explains *la salade niçoise*. Your students are taking notes on the ingredients because they want to try to make this salad as soon as they get back to the states. Wouldn't it be great if you could take your other French classes along?

As wonderful as this opportunity is, the time, cost, and logistics limit the feasibility of the trip to a small number of students. If, on the other hand, these experiences were captured on video, all of your students could participate and benefit from such a visually exciting presentation.

That is why teachers have bravely adapted travelogues, commercials, and broadcast programing for classroom use. However, the intended

audience for these videos in their original form has never been the students in the classroom. If the promise of television as the most powerful instructional tool is to be realized, then the software must be specifically designed with the learner in mind. Instructional television is a genre unto itself.

The Video Revolution

Just as the 80's saw the proliferation of computers in the schools, the decade of the 90's will see the coming of age of instructional television. The hardware is already in place. Rare is the school that does not have a television monitor and a VCR. The time needed to learn how to use this equipment is minimal since both items are currently so prevalent in American homes. No need to make the equipment "user friendly"; it already is.

Just as with the computer revolution, there is some lag time in waiting for the software to be produced. Videos with high instructional value built in are on the way. No longer is video production limited to the networks, superstations, and cable companies. The cameras, recording decks, and editing machines exist now that are of broadcast quality at a fraction of the cost a decade ago. It is now possible for independent videographers to provide the specific software to feed the video revolution in the classroom.

The development of instructional videos is essential to the future of education. Only when a "critical mass" of software (i.e. videos designed for learners) has been attained can the computer and television be bonded together to produce interactive video on a practical and wide-spread basis.

At that point, the electronic classroom of the twenty-first century will become a reality.

The Foreign Language Textbook of the Future

In preparing a lesson, teachers make decisions designed to tailor the information, materials, and activities to the learners. No matter how sophisticated the instructional tools become, this essential role for teachers will not change. The ideal textbook empowers the teacher and enhances the "learnability" of the lesson. Empowerment of the teacher is achieved by instructional material which 1) matches the teaching objectives, 2) is under the control of the teacher, 3) breaks through the limitations of the classroom, 4) condenses time, and 5) freezes the linguistic event being studied. Enhancement of "learnability" occurs when 1) the visual sense is stimulated, 2) auditory information is linked to the visual images, 3) students actively respond to the material, and 4) students can review the material at their own time, space and pace.

Empowerment of the teacher

As foreign language teachers move away from grammar-based content toward a situational approach, the textbook material will need to reflect the shift in teaching objectives. Instead of grammatical paradigms, teachers will need to show native speakers functioning in the language in an authentic environment. The video is ideally suited to present this type of information since it captures how native speakers look and act when they speak as well as the culturally-rich environment in which they live. At this

initial point of the lesson where listening proficiency is the objective, speech which is not tightly controlled and action which is not overly "staged" are desirable features of an instructional video. The speakers and the language need to be seen and heard in as natural a context as possible.

Thanks to the VCR, the teacher has extensive control over the medium. Attentive to the counter, the teacher can stop and replay segments being studied. The video should have segments that are three to seven minutes in length and which contain sub-segments lasting a minute or two. After seeing one whole segment as an overview, the students are shown each sub-segment. The teacher can stop after a sub-segment to present activities that invite active viewing by the students. The teacher enables the interaction between the video and the students. The teacher evaluates the level of understanding attained by the students and is the one who decides when to proceed to the next segment.

Foreign language teachers are constantly struggling with the artificial surroundings of the classroom. They use posters, pictures, and flags to create an ambience of being elsewhere than in a classroom. Short of taking the whole class to a foreign country, the video is the best way of introducing students to native speakers in their natural and cultural environment. The presentation of the language is embedded in the locale indigenous to the speaker. The language, therefore, becomes an authentic, natural facet of the speaker's personality. Especially when it is spoken by people the same age as the students, the language is believable and the speakers become role-models. The video enables the teacher to break through the limitations of the classroom to create a real encounter with the people speaking the language.

Even if a teacher could take a whole class to a foreign country, a significant block of time is necessary for travel. Then, to find the circumstances that allow the students to use the language they have learned in a specific situation is at best haphazard and time-consuming. The video collapses time. On the other hand, the event on video is available at will and can be recalled as many times as necessary.

The video "freezes" a linguistic event which would not be possible if the whole class were in the foreign country. This "freeze-action" allows the teacher to preview the situation and to prepare the learning activities ahead of time. Then, while teaching the segment, the teacher can replay the event several times in exactly the same way. In fact, each and every class that sees the video segment participates in the same, common experience.

Enhancement of the "learnability" of the lesson

Most learning theories identify the visual sense as being the primary channel of learning. Some theorists estimate that as much as 80% of all learning is absorbed through the visual sense. The dominance of this perceptual mode makes the video a powerful means of learning. What is learned is far more than vocabulary identification. As people talk on camera, the viewer sees the gestures and mannerisms of the native speakers. The eye feeds the visual images to the conscious as well as the unconscious mind. Both cerebral hemispheres are stimulated so that students have impressions that are both linear and random, verbal and non-verbal, logical and intuitive.

The second most receptive sense is that of hearing. For those learners whose perceptual strength is auditory, the video also feeds this

sensory channel. Because video combines auditory and visual information, both senses are stimulated which supports, supplements, and reinforces the information to be learned. Since almost all learners have either a visual or an auditory preference as their primary or secondary perceptual strength, the combination of both stimuli reaches a high percentage of the learners in the classroom.

Because the segments and sub-segments are of a short duration after which the teacher stops the video for analysis, the students become active learners. In contrast to presentations from textbook which are characterized by teacher-initiated questions, the video tends to generate at least an equal number of questions from the students who are curious about a number of elements they see or hear in the video. In addition to wondering about what is being said, the students ask questions about the speakers' gestures, dress, and surroundings. At first the questions appear to be unrelated to the main focus of the video. However, these "satellite" questions provide understanding about the cultural context within which the speaker is living. Teachers, identifying topics about which students are curious, can turn the questions back to the students, thereby encouraging them to express their own personalized and affective responses to the video. Eventually, the discussion returns to the main topic which is now flavored with a richer cultural appreciation. The video is not simply a behavioralistic stimulus, but is rather a face-to-face encounter with a foreign people and their culture. Seen in its complexity, that culture communicates a sense of its integral internal logic through the video. The viewer tends to be more tolerant of cultural differences because those differences are seen in their natural context, rather than in meaningless

isolation. The students arrive at this fuller appreciation of the language and culture through interactive use by the teacher of the video.

The video, as discussed above, takes into account the individual differences of a large majority of the learners by attending to their visual and auditory perceptual strengths. Because the individual students can take the video with them either home, where an increasing number of households have VCR's, or to the school and/or community library which typically have VCR's for public use, the video allows for other learning style differences. The students can view the video at a time best suited to their learning style. They can watch the video in an environment in which they are most at ease and receptive for learning. Also, the students can review the video as many times as they want, allowing them to learn at their own pace. The flexibility of the video format accommodates a wide variety of learning style characteristics.

Conclusion

Teaching can be described as the process of helping students make sense out of new experiences. This is especially true in the foreign language classroom where there is so much that is new and unfamiliar to the students. The novice language learner quite literally starts from scratch. Even at the intermediate and advanced levels there are always new elements of the language and culture to learn. The challenge in teaching is finding ways to help students relate to new material and become active participants in the learning process. Using videos that are specifically designed for classroom instruction is a effective way to empower teachers and to enhance the "learnability" of the lesson.